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The Failure to Unite

Resistance to the Nazi Regime existed in all branches of German society both before and during World War II. The most prominent group of resisters consisted of members of the German elite and military. In 1944, the group was responsible for the failed assassination attempt and *coup d'etat* against Hitler, but the group had been in existence before the war even began. Many attempts were made by people in the Resistance to gain crucial support from the West, but in spite of sharing a common enemy in the Nazis, all of the attempts met with failure.

In 1938, the group wanted to launch a *coup d'etat* to prevent Hitler from invading Czechoslovakia and starting what they believed would be a war with Britain and France.[1] The Resistance hoped that the British would take a firm stance against Hitler. This contact was the first in a series of attempts by the German Resistance to gain external support from the Allies prior to and during the war. All of the attempts met with failure for a variety of reasons.

Scholars have focused predominantly on the communication between between the conservative German group and the British during the war. Not as much work has been done to analyze the relationship between the German Resistance and the United States. Separate communication was made to the United States starting in late 1941 and continuing up until July 20th, 1944.[2] The United States was exercised tremendous influence in the Grand Alliance; had

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[1] Michael C. Thomsett, *The German Opposition to Hitler: The Resistance, the Underground, and Assassination Plots, 1938-1945* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1997), pg 109. The Locarno Pact of 1925 promised French assistance if Czechoslovakia was invaded. Since France was also allied with Britain if France went to war Britain would follow.

[2] "Note on the Eliot-Trott Conversations." Geneva, December 1941, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, Record Group 226, Entry 210, Box 92, Folder 367.

they desired some form of cooperation with the German Resistance, then the likelihood of a partnership would have greatly increased.

While this paper will examine the factors that prevented cooperation between the Resistance and Britain during the early years of the war, the primary focus is on America's independent refusal to even consider plans proposed by the Resistance. I seek to analyze the obstacles that stood in the way of American cooperation, with special attention to the dominant influence of President Roosevelt, in determining attitudes and actions with regards to Germany, both during the war and in planning for a post-war Europe.

The morality that motivated many resistors in the Beck group is emphasized in Thomsett's book, *The German Opposition to Hitler*, which argues that morality was a key factor. While other factors influenced members, morality was prominent in all areas of German resistance, as shown by quotes by Claus von Stauffenberg. Stauffenberg decided to pull away from the Nazi regime because doing nothing would result in a man being "a traitor to his conscious"[3] .

Thomsett also recognizes the faults of the resistance - both their disorganization and hesitancy – but doesn't view them as the main reason for the group's failure. Instead, Thomsett looks externally to find what he believes was the major factor in the Resistance's failure. The German Resistance made multiple attempts to contact the British both prior to the Munich Agreement and then during the war. Each attempt failed to reach terms that would enable the two groups to work together or even for the Allies to declare their support for any act performed by the Resistance.

Peter Hoffmann, who analyzes only Britain's correspondence with the German Resistance, demonstrated that one of the main reasons that negotiations continuously fell through was that

[3] Thomsett, *The German Opposition to Hitler*

Britain required America's and Russia's support in the war and both of those countries had not desire to cooperate with any German group.

Correspondence, however, occurred before either America or Russia allied themselves with Britain, and those early attempts also failed. Hedva Ben-Israel examines the changing policies in Britain both on a political and public front. Politically, the progression of the war caused the aims of the British government to drift away from the aims of the German Resistance. Ben-Israel draws attention to British propaganda and in particular Lord Vansittart, who was staunchly and vocally anti-Nazi.

Stauffenberg: A Family History, 1905-1944 also by Peter Hoffmann details the history of Claus von Stauffenberg's life. The book contains a chapter dedicated to foreign communication between the Resistance and the Allies that occurred from when Stauffenberg joined the movement up until July 20, 1944. Hoffmann looks at how Stauffenberg and other members felt about working with the Allies and the multiple attempts they continued to make.

Steven Casey's book, *Cautious Crusader*, focuses solely on American policy during the war, with a focus on President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his opinions during the war. The book carefully analyzes different factors in America, how they shifted during the war, and how they affected America's relationship with both the German Resistance and Germany as a whole. Casey pays special attention to how Roosevelt's opinions and preferences affect American policy during the war, painting him as the chief figure who decided how America would handle matters concerning unconditional surrender and the German Resistance.

The conservative resistance was in the best position to overthrow Hitler than any other resistance movement in Germany. Chief members of the conservative resistance consisted of high officials in the German government and military. General Ludwig Beck, the former chief of staff,

was considered the leader of the movement, and the movement also had allies within the Abwehr, the German military intelligence, including Hans Oster and Wilhelm Canaris.[4] These notable figures placed the movement in a position where the resisters could at times "be as well informed as inner circles of Nazis" and have access to resources that would crucial in a *coup d'etat*.[5]

Prior to the outbreak of war, one of the biggest obstacle the Resistance faced when it came to establishing an alliance with Britain was the differences in their aims. Hedva Ben-Israel states in his article "Cross Purposes" that the months before the Munich Conference in 1938, when Chamberlain agreed to let Hitler annex Czechoslovakia, were the only time when the aims of the German Resistance and the British were synchronized.[6] While both the Resistance and British wanted to prevent war, their approaches could not have been more different.

Chamberlin's actions in the fall of 1938 demonstrate that appeasement was Britain's main goal. He operated under the belief that if Hitler was allowed to take the territory he desired then he would stop making further demands and war would be avoided. Despite multiple anti-Hitler German individuals making contact with the British to warn them against that path, there is no evidence that Chamberlin every wavered from his appeasement policy. Instead, he remained so committed to it that not only did he meet with Hitler in September 1938 to begin talks about how the Czechoslovakia issue could be resolved, but the meeting also occurred in Germany at the Prime Minister's request. Such supplicant actions demonstrated to Hitler that the British did not want a war and that they would be more willing to give into Hitler's demands. The belief was proven true

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[4] Thomsett, *The German Opposition to Hitler*, pg 49

[5] David Clay Large, *Contending with Hitler: Varieties of German Resistance in the Third Reich* (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1991), pg 93

[6] Hedva Ben-Israel, "Cross Purposes: British Reactions to the German Anti-Nazi Opposition", Journal of Contemporary History 20, no. 3 (1985): 423-38

when, after the Munich Agreement was forged, Czechoslovakia was abandoned by its allies and Hitler was allowed to take over the entire country.

The Resistance approached the situation with the opposite aim. They did not want to appease Hitler, they wanted to overthrow him.[7] General Erwin von Witzleben communicated to anti-Nazi Fritz-Dietlof von der Schulenburg, the vice president of the German police, the common belief of most members of the anti-Hitler group of the time that "from a military point of view, Hitler was leading the country down a dangerous and destructive path".[8] Germany was still in the process of rebuilding its military after being prevented from maintaining a substantial army after World War I. Had war broken out, these men were certain that the weakness of the German army would have been unable to withstand the force of Britain and France.

Since Hitler refused to listen to any of his generals, appeasing him was not an option for them. Members of the anti-Nazi Resistance believed the only way to save the nation was to get rid of Hitler. Unfortunately, the Resistance believed that the British felt the same way about Hitler and would therefore take a strong stance against Hitler.

It is important to note that while a fair amount of German generals opposed Hitler they were in the minority. Hitler's success as Fuhrer granted him immense public support; he had been able to peacefully annex Austria and was promising to return Germany to her former glory. The majority of Germans would not have accepted a *coup d'etat* unless there was clear reason for it, which was why external support was deemed necessary: "A tough stand against Hitler by the Western Powers would have strengthened [the Resistance's] position immeasurably" because if Hitler had ignored the clear threat of a disastrous war there would just cause to overthrow him.[9]

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[7] Thomsett, *The German Opposition to Hitler*
[8] *The German Opposition to Hitler,* pg 109
[9] Thomsett, *The German Opposition to Hitler*, pg 89

Furthermore, Hitler's immense popularity had left many key figures wavering between remaining loyal to the regime and supporting the Resistance. The reassurance of firm opposition from the Western Powers would have swayed "many still undecided or wavering generals and other key figures" to the Resistance's side.[10]

Had the German Resistance and the British pursued the same course of action then there would have been no reason for them not to cooperate. Britain would have taken a strong stance against Hitler's territorial demands, making it clear that war would occur if Czechoslovakia was invaded, and then one of two paths would have been taken within Germany. Either Hitler would listen to the warning and cease his plans for the good of Germany, which some resisters believed he would, or more likely, Hitler would have ignored the warning, invaded Czechoslovakia, and the Resistance would have initiated their planned coup.[11] The British policy of appeasement made either course impossible.

As the war commenced another obstacle emerged that hindered any chances of cooperation: increasing distrust of all Germans. Early in the war there existed a belief in Britain of two Germanys, a Nazi one and a non-Nazi one. The Resistance would have aligned themselves with the non-Nazi Germany, which the British might have been more open to working with. However, the Two Germanys view did not last long in Britain.

By late 1939 Britain already viewed the Prussian militaristic spirit of top-down, hierarchical, martial culture that Germany had embraced as the core problem. It was that spirit that had brought about two wars within less than half a century. Getting rid of Hitler would not be enough because the German militaristic and expansionist ideas would remain alive and Germany

[10] *The German Opposition to Hitler*, pg 89
[11] Ben-Israel, "Cross Purposes"

would eventually revive as a military threat just as it had after World War I.[12] The British believed that the spirit must be extinguished otherwise more conflicts would continue to arise.[13] Sir Francis d'Arcy Osborne, who was the minister at the Vatican for Britain, believed that Britain could not "make peace so long as the German military machine remained intact".[14] This view was also supported by Lord Simon and Lord Robert Vansittart, who both saw no difference between the German people and the Nazis. If Germany wasn't defeated then "because of the German temperament another Hitler would arise".[15] Their fear had moved from the Nazis in particular to all of Germany and that outlook remained prevalent in Britain for the rest of the war.

Lacking overt British backing the Resistance lost the small amount of ground they had to stand on. Their attempts at negotiating an alliance was based on the belief that Britain only viewed the Nazis as their enemy and would therefore be willing to work alongside a new government. But as Ben-Israel states in his article, "the more the Germans were seen as tending to be equally guilty, the less it matter who the actual people governing Germany were".[16] A new government would simply be the same threat with a different name. The makeup of the anti-Nazi opposition reinforced that belief. Most of the members of the conservative resistance movement were high ranking members of the German government and military. They more than anyone outside of the Nazis would have been viewed by the British as embodying the Prussian militaristic spirit.

The British doubted the movement's strength within Germany. Hitler had a firm control over Germany and public opinion. Effective censorship prevented opposition groups from establishing broad public support. If the resisters did not have a solid base of support within their

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[12] Peter Hoffman, "The Question of Western Allied Co-Operation with the German Anti-Nazi Conspiracy, 1938-1944.", The Historical Journal 34, no. 2 (1991): 437-64
[13] "The Question of Western Allied Co-Operation with the German Anti-Nazi Conspiracy."
[14] "The Question of Western Allied Co-Operation with the German Anti-Nazi Conspiracy."
[15] Ben-Israel, "Cross Purposes"
[16] "Cross Purposes"

country, the British knew the chances that a takeover would succeed were slim. The Prussian military code also stressed the importance of loyalty to one's superior regardless of personal views.[17]

When looking at the loss of support within Germany, the wartime environment must be considered. Early in the war Hitler was achieving success and Germany was considered strong. There either wasn't just reason for a *coup d'etat* or the generals feared the backlash that would follow if they did successfully overthrow Hitler. The fear of a second "stab-in-the-back" legacy was prominent. It is possible that, at this time, the wavering generals partially feared that a similar accusation would be aimed at them if they overthrew Hitler and made peace when the Axis powers were strong.

This was no longer the case during the later years of the war when Germany was clearly weakening, facing unconditional surrender, and defeat was approaching. Had an alliance with the Allies been made at that point then it is more likely that it would have convinced the wavering generals to support the Resistance. By 1943, members of anti-Hitler groups firmly believed that if Allied support was given then internal support would grow. In a meeting with the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Agent Theodore Morde in 1943, Franz von Papen stressed how important it was that the Western Allies "be able to give [the Germans] [...] something concrete that promised a future for Germany" in order for von Papen to convince his allies to initiate overthrowing Hitler.[18] If such assurance was given then von Papen had no qualms taking whatever action was necessary to defeat the Nazis from within.

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[17] Thomsett, *The German Opposition to Hitler*

[18] Jürgen Heideking, Christof Mauch, and Marc Frey, *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler: A Documentary History* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), pg 142

Support, however, was never given long enough for a plan to take effect. It is unknown whether or not the generals in question would have joined in on a plan backed by the Western Allies, but up through the July 20th plot, a main source for hesitation amongst anti-Nazis was the lack of external support.

But the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) recognized that the military leaders were "the only ones [that had] disposition of sufficiently powerful forces to challenge the Nazi positions".[19] Their odds were not favorable, but in comparison to the other groups, they had the best chance of overthrowing the Nazis and establishing a new German government.

The OSS was aware of resistance within Germany in 1942 and of the conservative group by 1943.[20] The OSS received thorough and frequent information about various aspects of the anti-Hitler movement in Germany in addition to contact from members of the July 20th group. The notable attempt at contact came from Helmuth von Moltke in December 1943. Moltke was the founder of the Kreisau Circle, a group of resisters who were in contact with the group behind the July 20th bombing, including Beck and Canaris. The plan, known as the Herman Plan, proposed full military cooperation with the Western Allies that would entail the conservative group providing the Allies with a practically open western front by ordering the German forces to the eastern front, which the Resistance viewed as crucial to maintain.[21] The invasion and occupation of Germany was the end goal of the Allies and a weakened western front would have allowed an invasion to occur with minimum resistance.

The ability of opening the Western Front would be obtained by the Resistance by overthrowing the Nazis and forming their own anti-Nazi government. While they agreed that

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[19] *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 89
[20] *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 5
[21] Heideking, Mauch, and Frey, *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 174

"unequivocal military defeat and occupation of Germany" was necessary, the Resistance wanted to be the ones who overthrew Hitler prior to the Allies' victory.[22] Not only would this allow the Resistance to have a better position to negotiate further with the Allies, but they also felt the removal of the Nazis would allow the separation between the Nazis and Germans to become clear.

The morality behind their opposition was of chief importance to the resisters. Many of the members, such as Claus von Stauffenberg, turned against Hitler after seeing the horrors inflicted by his orders. They believed that Hitler didn't represent the true German spirit, but due to the unyielding hold Hitler had over the country the Nazis' terror suppressed the true Germany. In the resister's eyes, if the Nazis were overthrown the German people would at last be able to voice their true thoughts. Even when the opposition stood alone against towering odds before July 20th they viewed it as "their moral duty to proceed".[23] The success of the movement wasn't as important as showing people that within Germany there existed those who stood opposed to Hitler. Showing the existence of such a people was why the Resistance in every communication with the Allies asserted their dedication to being the ones to overthrow Hitler.

Without support from the Western Allies, however, the Resistance was hesitant to act. In the report on the Herman Plan, Moltke expressed the resister's worry that if cooperation between the Allies and the Resistance weren't acted on properly and with genuine dedication then the war would conclude with more conservative constituencies feeling betrayed from within like many had after World War I. The Opposition wanted to avoid making certain members of the German public feel like the movement had stabbed Germany in the back. If such a feeling arose, Moltke doubted not only the success of the anti-Hitler government but also cause the members of the Resistance to be ineffective in terms of Germany's future.

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[22] *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 174
[23] Thomsett, *The German Opposition to Hitler*, pg 195

The Herman Plan was the prominent attempt, outside the Morde-Papen talks, of contact with the American government. The Morde-Papen talks centered on the Germans, with Allied support, overthrowing the Nazi government but specifics were never discussed before the talks were prevented from continuing.[24] The Herman Plan, however, contained a specific plan from the resisters; their aims and intentions were clear from the report written by the OSS. While the plan did not proceed it was not without support. The OSS Agent, referred to as "Dogwood", who wrote the report declared his support for the plan. His diversion of the OSS in Istanbul, Turkey where the talks with Moltke had been held had been in communication with Moltke for an extended period of time. Moltke had first initiated contact in August 1943.[25] From there further talks had eventually been arranged for late 1943, when the Herman Plan was passed on to OSS Istanbul.

Dogwood viewed the plan as the only one that could offer the "chance [to end] the War in the West at one stroke, and save perhaps many hundred thousand lives".[26] His view was shared by Professor Karl Brandt, who analyzed the plan at the request of the OSS Director in February 1944. Brandt was an immigrant from Germany who had been in contact with certain anti-Nazi groups, including Moltke's group, since the 1930s.[27] His view on the plan was that it's advantages outweighed its cons.

Unlike the other opposition groups, the Kreisau Circle was made up of intellectuals and had ties to Beck's group due to certain members belonging to both groups. Their own background and connection to the military group placed them at a more advantageous position. They had the backing of the anti-Nazi military group, which enabled them to launch a possible *coup d'etat* and

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[24] Heideking, Mauch, and Frey, *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 146
[25] Peter Hoffmann, Stauffenberg: A Family History, 1905-1944 (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pg 215
[26] Heideking, Mauch, and Frey, *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 179
[27] *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*

military take over, and the intellectuals in the Circle understood how best to structure an anti-Nazi government that could stand on its own after the war. The underground movements, such as the labor movement, didn't have access to the same resources. They wouldn't have been able to propose a plan on par with the Herman Plan let alone initiate it with any chance of success.

Brandt also saw the group as reliable because its members weren't beholden to one set of ideals. Members came from varying backgrounds in society but what Brandt recognized they shared was the aim to prevent "the annihilation of all that to them means Germany" despite the risks that pursuing the goal placed both upon them and their families.[28] The aim joined them together within the movement. The majority of members in the conservative group also shared a negative view of communism, which was why the Herman Plan permitted the opening of the Western Front but not the eastern one. resisters didn't want to see Germany fall into the hands of the communists. Brandt recognized this as well.

While Brandt did endorse the Herman Plan he didn't do so blindly. In his memorandum to Director Donovan, he recommended seven points that he felt must be garnered from the Germans in order for the plan to proceed. These points included determining the strength and resources behind the movement and ascertaining how the resisters planned to conduct their plans both on the fronts and within Germany.[29]

The points were never passed on to any member of the Resistance. In fact, the memodram of the Herman Plan was never passed on to the Joints Chiefs of Staff. The OSS Planning Group and OSS Research and Analysis Branch rejected the plan due to their doubt of the group's existence, capability, and strength.[30] A cautious approach wasn't unwarranted since the odds

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[28] *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 197
[29] Heideking, Mauch, and Frey, *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 199-200
[30] *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 201-205

facing the Resistance was quite steep in 1943. However, the plan proposed by Karl Brandt didn't push for blind faith in the group. Confirming the proposed would have given the OSS added intelligence on the movement and even then Brandt recommended that the military proceed under the "assumption that the assisting Herman group action will fail" but still be prepared to support the plan if it was successful.[31] Brandt was also cautious about the Resistance, but he believed that the benefits of success or even inner turmoil within Germany would benefit the Allies more than ignoring the plan altogether.

The OSS was not willing to investigate the group further to ascertain if there was the slightest chance of the plan's success. They did, however, view the group as useful, but only for means that would solely benefit the Allies. In their memorandum rejecting the plan, the OSS Chairmen recommended that communication be maintained so that the group could be used to benefit the Allies' invasion "without any regard whatsoever for the German individuals involved, their safety, [...] or the ultimate effect upon Germany".[32] The resistance group was reduced to a tool in the eyes of the OSS. The coldness exhibited in the document was a change from previous reports from the OSS, which did reject assisting the Resistance but didn't recommend exploiting them.

Even William Langer, director of the Branch of Research and Analysis, who warned the OSS of the dangers of the plan didn't believe that the group should be completely abandoned. One of his recommendations was that as much aid as possible should be granted to the group with the intention of using the group as "a nucleus for a post-Nazi government" after the war.[33]

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[31] *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 200-201
[32] Heideking, Mauch, and Frey, *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 205
[33] *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 203

The change in tone suggests that by the time the Herman Plan was proposed a shift had occurred in the United States that impacted how Germany and her people were viewed. If there was still a majority positive view of Germany separate from the negative view of the Nazis then the future of the country would have still concerned the OSS. The complete lack of concern supports that German opinion had shifted.[34]

When looking at America's relationship with the German Resistance, four factors played a role in preventing cooperation between America and the anti-Nazi Resistance.

First, President Franklin D. Roosevelt began the war wanting to separate the German people from the Nazis, but as the war went on his views changed. He adopted a more negative view of all of Germany and pushed for harsher terms, culminating into a demand for unconditional surrender.

Second, in 1942 the Allied Forces in North Africa made a deal with Francois Darlan, a high ranking member of the Vichy government, to achieve a ceasefire in French North Africa. The deal garnered FDR widespread criticism in the liberal press, and the chance that similar deals would be made during the war remained a concern of the liberals.

Third, the stability of the Grand Alliance and a unified wartime effort were critically important to FDR. From June, 1940 on Russian troops were fighting and dying against the Nazis along a huge front. Keeping the Soviet Union at ease factored into all the decisions made for Germany, including contacts with possible opposition forces.

Finally, FDR's administration also studied American public opinion closely during the war. Numerous polls were taken to assess how the American public felt about the war, including

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[34] *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 208. It should be noted that at this point in time due to the OSS delaying deciding on a course of action for the Herman Plan - the final rejection came in April 1944 while Dogwood had pushed for a decision by January 1944 - the line of communication through Moltke was closed due to Moltke's arrest in January. The OSS, however, were unaware of the arrest when discussing how to proceed.

their feelings toward the Germans and possible peace settlements. Domestic political conditions and the mood of the voters created limits on action the administration might want to undertake when implementing policies during the war.

When looking at America's opinion of Germany during the war, one must look at President Roosevelt's views and how they altered as the war progressed. In his speeches at the beginning of the war FDR only called Hitler and the Nazis the enemy, while the German people were considered uninformed "slaves of the state".[35] The association of slavery with the German people made them appear as victims of the Nazis' regime. While the Nazis incited horrors across Europe, Roosevelt wanted the German people to be viewed as having no choice in their actions. Thus, the people were painted in a better light by the president's distinct separation between Nazis who were the evil behind the war.

Not all were in favor of the president's view. Prior to Pearl Harbor the majority of the American people were opposed to entering the war. When America entered the war, officials wanted to guarantee that the public were firmly against the enemy; they viewed a hate campaign not only against the Nazis but against all of Germany as the solution. The campaign was broached to the president during a cabinet meeting on April 11 by Henry Morgenthau and Harold Ickes, the former stressing that the American public "ought to be taught to 'hate Germany'".[36] The United States embarking on a hatred campaign against all of Germany would have fully explained their adamant refusal to work with any form of resistance movement. If the public hated the German people then any attempt to work with even an anti-Nazi German would have been met with backlash. Roosevelt, however, never endorsed or approved of an anti-German campaign. After the

[35] Steven Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War Against Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)
[36] Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pg 57

idea was proposed by Morgenthau and Ickles, he made the distinction between the Nazis and the German people even more clear in his speeches by using the words Hitler and Nazi twenty-five percent more than the word German.[37]

In addition to refusing endorsement of a hatred campaign, Roosevelt wasn't opposed to or pessimistic about a revolution against the Nazis starting in Germany in 1942. He spoke favorably in 1942 about such a revolution occurring when the German people found the best opportunity to strike against the Nazis.[38] His optimism toward an internal revolution led to a push for psychological warfare against Germany. Britain also agreed with the plan and both Churchill and Roosevelt agreed that the Allied bombing against Germany would lead to the desired "internal convulsions".[39] The hope was that the tactics would weaken Germany internally and turn the people against the Nazi regime to the point that they would revolt. The bombings did have half of the desired effect. Hatred did spark within Germany but not toward the Nazis. Despite Roosevelt's personal feelings, the bombings caused the German people to believe that the United States viewed all of Germany as the enemy. Franz von Papen stressed this sentiment during his meeting with Theodore Morde in 1943, insisting that the bombings were primarily causing harm, both physically and mentally, and turning most German people against the Allies.[40]

The bombing therefore served as propaganda for the Nazis to dissuade any underground movement from looking to the Allies for assistance. It left the German people, even those who were against the Nazis, with the impression that the Allies didn't distinguish between the Nazis and the themselves. The belief went against what Roosevelt wanted to promote, but since the

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[37] Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pg 57
[38] *Cautious Crusade*, pg 59
[39] Winston Churchill, Franklin D Roosevelt, and Warren F Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), pg 224
[40] Heideking, Mauch, and Frey, *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 139

bombings continued the belief persisted as well. It was mainly the common people, not the military or Nazis, being affected by the bombing, who were the ones that the Allies were most interested in working with.

Roosevelt was particular about the revolution he wanted to see in Germany. He was in favor of a grassroots revolution, not one led by the elites or the military. Before America entered the war Roosevelt demonstrated an inclination toward unconditional surrender in his fireside chat on December 29, 1940 when he stated that the Nazis could only be defeated by "total surrender".[41] Roosevelt maintained the distinction between the Nazis and all of Germany, but the seeds for unconditional surrender were already planted. The inclination toward unconditional surrender would explain why, when looking at anti-Nazi resistance, social revolution was favored over a military coup. A social revolution would have possibly gotten rid of the Nazis but the likelihood that it could put in place a long term post-war government was low. A temporary government may have been formed, but the Allies would have been able to step in and point Germany down the path they wanted and influence the shape Germany's new government took.

A military revolution, on the other hand, was viewed as "disastrous" and incapable of leading to peace as early as April 1942.[42] The Secretary of State's assistant made this declaration despite having received information, which he mentioned in the same document, from the British of peace envoys from an unspecified group of German generals. Since Beck's group was the central group of military resistance it can be assumed that the envoys were connected in some way to him and the others who tried to initiate a *coup d'etat* in 1938. The group was rejected offhand even though the military would have been in a better position than any social opposition movement. The OSS in Bern also recognized in November 1943 that only the military and the

[41] Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat.", December 29, 1940. (The American Presidency Project)
[42] Heideking, Mauch, and Frey, *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 21

labor anti-Hitler groups had any chance of action and therefore propaganda should be targeted at them.[43] The ensuing inactions of the United States indicates that the official policy was opposed to a revolution headed by German elites.

A revolution led by military and political elites would have established their own government once the Nazis had been overthrown. Members of Beck's group made it clear that their intentions were to establish a new German government so negotiations with the Allies could occur. The new government would have been willing to cooperate with the Allies so long as the German nation wasn't risked, which meant there were certain demands that the Allies wanted that might not have been fulfilled after negotiations. It also meant that the Allies wouldn't have had complete control on how the German nation would progress after the war; they would have to work with a new government that had its own aims rather than a government they put in power.

In addition, if a post-revolutionary Germany wasn't left in disarray but instead had a stable government put in place, then German leadership would be able to maintain a considerable amount of strength after the war. Elmer Davis, an American journalist, mentioned that the outcome of a military revolution would be a "compromise peace, which would leave Germany still strong enough compared to her shattered neighbors".[44] The fear behind this was that Germany would then prepare for the next war while the surrounding countries were still recovering from the current one. A compromise peace was also a prospect that FDR didn't favor. He wanted Germany to succumb entirely to defeat and there was only one way to guarantee that: unconditional surrender.

Unconditional surrender prevented any negotiations from occurring between any type of German government, pro-Nazi or not. Roosevelt's position in favor of unconditional surrender from the beginning wasn't declared as the Allies's official aim until the Casablanca conference in

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[43] *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 153
[44] Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pg 127

January, 1943 where Churchill and Roosevelt met to plan the European strategy of the war. Its introduction was the harshest blow to the Resistance. It didn't lessen chances for cooperation - it eliminated them entirely. The Resistance had originally hoped that upon the success of a coup d'etat they would be able to negotiate peace terms with the Allied Powers. Now even if Hitler was overthrown and a new government was established there was no hope that the Allies would distinguish between the two governments. The fear was only confirmed when Roosevelt declared that Germany would not be left with "a shred of control [...] of the instrument of government".[45] The Allies's message was clear: no matter what group headed the German government unconditional surrender would be demanded of it.

The push for unconditional surrender occurred at the same time as Roosevelt's change in views toward the German people and especially toward the German military. Where he had previously saw victims he now saw the enemies. The phrases associated with them shifted from implying that they were also victims to the terms "war-breeding" in regards to the German military. The Prussian militarism that existed within Germany was no longer acceptable and must be done away with. Roosevelt's turn against the German military put Beck's group at an even greater disadvantage since a majority of the heads of the movement hailed from the military, including Beck himself.

By late 1943, Roosevelt didn't look favorably on any resistance movement let alone one that originated in the upper circles of German military society.[46] When alerted of the conversations between von Papen and Morde, Roosevelt disapproved to the point of denying Morde a passport,

[45] Thomsett, *The German Opposition to Hitler*, pg 172
[46] Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pg 126

preventing any further correspondences from taking place.[47] The president's message was clear: no negotiations with the German elite would even be considered by the United States.

Roosevelt's opinion didn't develop independently from the rest of the war. During the war, the president was concerned with two primary matters when it came to his policies: The Soviet Union and American public opinion.

Roosevelt and Churchill, who both viewed the Soviets as the "only force capable of defeating the German army" agreed that securing the soviet Union in the Grand Alliance was extremely important.[48] If they lost Stalin then the possibility of a separate peace between Germany and the Soviet Union became a possibility, which would end the two front war. These fears were increased when the Soviets started the Moscow Free Germany Committee in the summer of 1943. The committee served as a way for the Soviets to communicate propaganda to the German soldiers and people on the eastern front in hopes that it would provoke a drop in morale. However, the OSS expressed concern about the committee to the president. Its existence meant that a separate German-Soviet peace could be forged through it, and while the Allies were stressing unconditional surrender the memorandum expressed more lenient peace prospects.[49] Concern was heightened by 1943 because Stalin was displeased that the Western Allies had not yet opened a second front in Europe.[50]

The possibility of a separate peace made appeasing Stalin was a large issue for Roosevelt. The conservative resistance movement threatened the relationship between the Soviet Union and the West. In the Herman Plan, the Resistance did not relinquish the eastern front. Keeping Stalin

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[47] Heideking, Mauch, and Frey, *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, pg 146
[48] Churchill, Roosevelt, and Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt*, pg 622
[49] United States, Office of Strategic Services, Research and Analysis Branch, Europe-Africa Division. "The Free Germany manifesto and the German people." 1943.
[50] Heideking, Mauch, and Frey, *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*

out of Germany was a chief concern for them due to their fear of communism, which was why they focused their outreach efforts on the West. They preferred the West to invade and occupy Germany than the Communists. Some members of the group were convinced that the West's fear of communism matched their own and that continued fighting on the eastern front wouldn't hinder negotiations. It was a mistake. Because of Stalin's distrust of the West, any peace deal with the Resistance would have threatened the Grand Alliance, especially one that betrayed the Soviet Union. In Roosevelt's eyes, the only way forward was to remain committed to unconditional surrender.

The Tehran Conference in late 1943 where Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt committed to opening the western front, further closed the door. At the conference, Stalin made it clear that he had no interest in peace with the Germans. His end goal was to render the Reich itself impotent so that German militarism could not provoke war again.[51] Stalin's views of the Germans now lined up with Roosevelt's hardening ones. Confident that Russia was committed to fight until "the destruction of Hitler and nazism" was achieved, Roosevelt maintained his position of unconditional surrender.[52] Not only was this a way to foster good relationships with the Soviets but it also presented Roosevelt with the opportunity to further establish his changed views. After Tehran, the president was firmly convinced that it wasn't just the Nazis that had to be defeated but the German nation as a whole.

While placating the Soviets played a role in the shift in the president's opinion, Roosevelt was always the driving force behind unconditional surrender. He was the first to publicly declare it at Casablanca and remained staunchly in support of it, despite people around him expressing doubt. Unconditional surrender was used by the Nazis as propaganda, making the German morale

[51] Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pg 139
[52] Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pg 127

strengthen along with their resistance to the Allies. Even Stalin expressed in January 1944 that he wanted some surrender terms to be established so the Nazis would be unable to use unconditional surrender as propaganda.[53] Roosevelt remained firm. Thus, the Grand Alliance was no longer joined together by a mutual support of unconditional surrender. Placating Stalin had been a primary concern for Roosevelt in 1943, but after the Tehran Conference the policy wasn't needed to secure the alliance.

Public opinion was highly valued by Roosevelt, but it was not decisive. From the start of the war the American public's opinions about Germany and the German people aligned with that of the president until mid-summer of 1944. By distinguishing between the Nazis and the German people since the start of the war, Roosevelt had influenced the public to only view the Nazis as the enemy. One poll taken in 1942 showed that only 21% of the American public viewed the German people as warlike or evil. In another poll, 74% placed blame solely on the Nazis while only 18% blamed both.[54] In most American's minds there was a clear distinction between German and Nazi, which influenced the public's opinion of how Germany should be handled after defeat. While the Nazis had to be defeated, the German people as a whole did not. The majority was in favor of disarmament and putting measures in place to control Germany, but harsher treatment for Germany as a whole wasn't popular. The public believed that once the Nazis were overthrown civil relations with Germany could resume.

Unconditional surrender didn't contradict that dual approach. The Nazis would be done away with, but harsh terms didn't necessarily have to be given. The only requirement was that the defeated have no say in the terms. The public could have maintained a view of wanting disarmament but otherwise good terms for Germany while still supporting unconditional

[53] Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pg 127
[54] Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pg 70

surrender. While a majority did agree with Roosevelt, throughout the war there was "growing support for a compromise peace", which was brought to Roosevelt's attention in September 1942.[55] This sentiment only continued to grow as the war progressed. By May 1944, 40% of Americans were in favor of a negotiated peace while only 50% opposed it.[56]

The public's distinction and openness to negotiations wouldn't have mattered with regards to the Resistance if the public believed the army was synonymous with the Nazis. The American public, however, associated the army with the people and seemed more open to a revolution led by the German military officials. In fact, the May 1944 polls reflected that the 40% who favored a negotiated peace favored it if the peace was proposed by the German military or elites.[57] While the administration only wanted to focus on a revolution that would leave Germany with only a weakened government after the war, the public was open to discussing peace with a new German government, which was precisely what the Resistance wanted.

Had the public's opinion truly been an influential force in how Roosevelt approached the war, then the growing support for a negotiated peace would have softened his view of unconditional surrender. It would have been too late to initiate the Herman Plan, but the May 1944 poll could have still influenced America's role in July 1944. The absence of any effect demonstrates that while Roosevelt did watch public opinion he wasn't beholden to it.

Prior to July 20th, the Allies had two last chances to work with the Resistance. The first was through the British. Adam von Trott attempted negotiations in June 1944 but returned empty-handed.[58] It was possible that the United States wasn't made aware of Trott's proposal, but since

[55] Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pg 77
[56] *Cautious Crusade*, pg 153
[57] *Cautious Crusade*, pg 153
[58] Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg*, pg 221

at the Tehran Conference the Allies had agreed to inform each other of all peace feelers so it was more likely that the information was relayed to the Americans.

The second instance occurred on July 12 when the OSS first became aware of an approaching "event" backed by the Resistance: this event would be Operation Valkyrie, the attempted assassination of Hitler and *coup d'etat* that occured on July 20.[59] In both of these instances if Roosevelt wanted to pursue an alternative root he could have. There were not many outside factors standing in the way by mid-summer 1944. Stalin was open to establishing peace terms, which could have been implemented once the new government was in place, and the American public wasn't against the German elites overthrowing for Hitler and then negotiating peace. However, no action was taken or aid sent to the Resistance.

Roosevelt's lack of action suggests that, beyond his personal stance, there was something else keeping him from acting. In November, 1942, the Allies accepted a deal with Vichy Admiral Jean-Francois Darlan that placed Darlan in charge of the civil administration of North Africa in exchange for a cease-fire in French Morocco and Algeria.[60] A public backlash erupted. Darlan had been deeply involved in the operations of the Vichy government in France and therefore had worked alongside the Nazis. Although many welcomed the ceasefire the backlash came from American liberals over what the deal represented.

In the eyes of liberal commentators there was a risk that this arrangement would establish the template of how the United States dealt with Nazi collaborators or peace envoys. As Henry Luce stated in *Time*, "the invasion of North Africa was the first great political-military adventure of the United States in World War II. Its tone would set the tone for others to come" therefore if the United States was willing to negotiate and make deals with Nazi collaborators then would they

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[59] Heideking, Mauch, and Frey, *American Intelligence and the German Resistance to Hitler*, Doc 45, 47, 48, 49
[60] Casey, *Cautious Crusade,* pg 112

be willing to do so again?[61] The American CBS war correspondent in London, Edward R Murrow, in response to the deal questioned if the Americans were "fighting the Nazis or sleeping with them".[62]

The criticism was only further fueled after Darlan's assassination on Christmas Eve, 1942 when he was replaced by Marcel Peyrouton, who was a French collaborator known for his brutality. Darlan had already been present in North Africa when the deal was struck, but Peyrouton had been brought by the Allies to fulfill the position. Mark Sullivan also voiced the same fear when America began to negotiate with Italian Marshal Pietro Badoglio, who took command in Italy after Mussolini fell from power in 1943, that "the present incident is a pre-glimpse of the postwar".[63] The possibility of the United States working with former Nazis seemed confirmed.

Liberal critics latched onto the possibility of more deals being made and used it as fuel against Roosevelt. Walter Lippmann, like other critics, was staunchly in favor of unconditional surrender and viewed a deal, even with groups who overthrew the Nazis, as unacceptable.[64] The criticism impacted Roosevelt more than public opinion and the alliance with the Soviet Union. He had shown that he was willing to maintain his own beliefs about war policies even when they didn't completely agree with outside perspectives. When it came to liberal critics attacking his policies, however, FDR was unable to hide his frustrations about them. His speechwriter recounts him refusing to speak of the matter and flying into a rage once when the topic was brought up.[65] His reaction alone demonstrates the value he placed on the opinions of journalists and commentators.

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[61] Casey, *Cautious Crusade,* pg 115
[62] Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory: The Mediterranean Theater in World War II*. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux 2005), pg 362
[63] *Cautious Crusade,* pg 125
[64] *Cautious Crusade,* pg 116
[65] Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pg 117

The Darlan and Peyrouton deals occurred two months and one month, respectively, before the Casablanca Conference where unconditional surrender was publicly declared for the first time. At the conference, both "Roosevelt and Churchill were forced to repair the possible misconceptions" not only in Stalin's mind but also in the minds "of their own peoples introduced by the Darlan Deal".[66] Unconditional surrender was the clear solution. Steven Casey also makes an interesting point in his book, *Cautious Crusader*, that when Roosevelt announced the goal of unconditional surrender he didn't mention it in the joint letter Churchill and him sent to Stalin, but instead announced it first to the journalists in attendance. The letter to Stalin mentions the operations America and Britain wanted to pursue in 1943 in Europe, Africa, and the Pacific but says nothing of surrender terms.[67] If securing Russia in the alliance was of chief importance to Roosevelt and he was highly concerned about a separate Russia-German peace then it would make sense to inform Stalin of America's and Britain's firm commitment to seeing the war through until the total defeat of Germany.

The decision suggests that Roosevelt saw informing the liberal journalists that further deals would not be made with Nazi collaborators, no matter their intention, as more important. Making it known that the Allies would only accept unconditional surrender implied that no further deals would even be considered.

Roosevelt's personal change in views coincided with his concern over liberal criticism of Darlan. His approval of the actions in North Africa suggests that he was at the very least open to negotiations with elites and generals if the end result benefited the Allies. Collaboration with the conservative resistance movement could have brought that. The plans involved saving thousands

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[66] Porch, *The Path to Victory*, pg 364

[67] Joseph Stalin, *Stalin's Correspondence with Churchill, Attlee, Roosevelt and Truman, 1941-45*. (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1958)

of Allies soldiers' lives by promising a faster end to the war and less resistance entering Germany. The new government proposed by the Resistance was also open to negotiating the final peace terms, meaning that the Allies would have a say in how Germany would function in the post-war world. Their own people may not be in charge of choosing who was running the government, but the Darlan Deal demonstrated that the Allies were willing to accept whoever was present, while the Peyrouton Deal showed that they were willing to place former collaborators in power.

Roosevelt's view hardened when he realized in late 1942 and early 1943 that the liberal commentators and journalists would not agree to any terms that weren't unconditional surrender. As the liberals made their views clear, the president's views shifted accordingly. It didn't matter that public opinion in regards to the deals were at the worst cautious. What mattered was that the commentators highly disapproved. Roosevelt was so concerned by what the liberals' reactions that not only did he prevent Theodore Morde from obtaining a passport to meet with Franz von Papen, but he also made sure that Reader's Digest, where Morde's cover had him working, wouldn't publish anything about the talks.[68]

A majority of Beck's group had worked within the Nazi Regime. Beck himself at worked alongside Hitler, despite opposing him, until his dismissal, and Oster and Canaris were high members of German intelligence. Despite their anti-Nazi stance it would have been easy for the liberal media to turn them into Nazi collaborators that were only turning against the regime to benefit themselves. If such a narrative was adopted then Roosevelt would be accused of making deals with more Darlan figures. Therefore, the only way to avoid the accusations was to deny any form of collaboration, even if that collaboration meant meeting with any German peace envoys.

[68] Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pg 126

The actions of the liberals after July 20th, 1944 gave clear proof that they would not have accepted any deal with the Resistance. The expectation was that Americans, and by extension the American press, would be at the very least disappointed that an attempt on Hitler's life failed. However, the New York Herald Tribune published on August 9, 1944 that the "American people [...] will not feel sorry that the bomb spared Hitler" because "Americans hold no grief for aristocrats as such and least of all for those given to the goosestep".[69] Despite their actions against the Nazis, the article villainized the group, painting them as former Nazis who were only turning against the Regime for their benefit. A *New York Times* article communicated the same message by comparing the *coup d'etat* to "a gangster's lurid underworld".[70] An assassination attempt against Hitler was the ultimate way for any anti-Nazi group to show that they were against the regime. If the American media refused to paint that in a positive or compassionate light then it follows that the only narrative they would accept was one in which all Germans were the villain.

It is not, therefore, unreasonable to hypothesize that had the liberals in the media been favorable toward the Darlan Deal, the door would have remained open for collaborations with the conservative resistance group. The majority of America's communication with the Resistance began in 1943, which was after the backlash from the Darlan Deal was felt by the president's administration. The door for negotiations was already closed. Roosevelt did not want to further upset the liberals or prove that their accusations that he planned to "abandon [America's] ideals"[71] were true.

This paper explored the contacts between the German anti-Nazi Resistance and the Western Allies and the reasons why both Britain and the United States refused to work with the

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[69] Thomsett, *The German Opposition to Hitler*, pg 230
[70] *The German Opposition to Hitler*, pg 230
[71] Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pg 124

Resistance despite having good reasons and multiple attempts to do so. Most criticism over the failure of the German Resistance targets the internal flaws of the movement, particularly their lack of support and organization. While these factors were weaknesses of the Resistance they didn't prevent the group from acting and therefore cannot be cited as the main reason for the movement's failure. The Resistance's inability to gain an external ally proved to be the largest obstacle for it, because it minimized the internal support for the movement when the time came to act.

Britain was mainly held back by differing aims prior to the war and general mistrust of any Germans. On the American side, public opinion and placating the Soviet Union played a role, but the two decisive factors complicating America's relations with anti-Hitler German was were Roosevelt's commitment to unconditional surrender, which was only strengthened by the liberal media's outcry over the ceasefire in North Africa.

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